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Tips and tools from your school library

# LOW HANGING FRUIT

## Embrace the Mobile

By Margie Ruppel, Associate Professor/Librarian, BSU

How do you feel about students' personal technology devices in the classroom? Can they enhance student learning, or are they merely distractions leading to classroom management issues?

Both ideas were expressed by teachers who participated in a Pew Research Center survey. The teachers agreed or strongly agreed that today's digital technologies (cell phones, social media, search engines, and the Internet) connect students to resources about topics of interest to them (90%) and help immerse students in topics they study (76%), while 64% stated that the technologies do more to distract students than to engage them academically.<sup>1</sup> Utilizing digital technologies is also an easy way to incorporate visual and aural learning techniques into your classroom.

My experience with both BSU students and elementary level children in a variety of settings has taught me a powerful lesson about eliminating distractions from the classroom. Lesson plans that incorporate engaging, active learning techniques not only eliminate most distractions (including the use of mobile devices), but also increase the depth of learning that occurs. Active learning allows little or no time for students to play games or text during class. More importantly, students see their devices as learning tools, not just entertainment.

### Easy entry points for mobile in the classroom:

LiLi databases for research; Google Earth to track a fictional character's journey; Instagram to collect visual evidence of a problem, issue or event, video/blog to create book trailers & reviews; Twitter posts for a GeoTracking project.

I hope you might see using digital technologies in the classroom as an opportunity for you to grow as a professional. My foray into using iPads with BSU preservice teachers and other students was challenging, emotional, and involved a good deal of trial and error. Collaborating with librarians, teachers and technology experts is beneficial and rewarding, and will leave you with new skills and a new view on your teaching philosophy.

<sup>1</sup> The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project Online Survey of Teachers, Mrch 7-April 23, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2012/11/01/part-ii-the-mixed-impact-of-digital-technologies-on-student-research/>

**"We know when you're texting in class, kids. Seriously, nobody just looks at their crotch and smiles."**

**-Every teacher everywhere**

## LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



### Free Technology for Teachers Blog

A blog by a teacher for teachers about free tech tools for the classroom, including practical tips and how-to's and advice.

<http://www.freetch4teachers.com/>

### Kathy Schrock's iPads for Teaching Website

If you work in an iPad school, this is the site for you. It is full of guides, activities, tutorials and all things iPad in the classroom. In fact, Schrock is an expert on educational technology in general.

<http://www.ipads4teaching.net/ipads-in-the-classroom.html>

### The Unquiet Librarian

Buffy Hamilton writes this blog chock full of models for collaborating with the school librarian, using classroom tech for all types of lessons.

<https://theunquietlibrarian.wordpress.com/>

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



### SPLAT's Gizmo Garage

There are a wide variety of digital devices available, and it can be challenging to learn enough about each one to incorporate mobile devices into your lesson plans.

SPLAT to the rescue! ICfL's Special Projects Library Action Team takes its "Gizmo Garage" to libraries and school to give staff a chance a hands-on time to become familiar with the options.

To make arrangements for SPLAT to bring the Gizmo Garage to your school, contact Shirley Biladeau at [shirley.biladeau@libraries.idaho.gov](mailto:shirley.biladeau@libraries.idaho.gov).

## DIGITAL TOOLS



### Video Creation in the Classroom

Take a look at how you can create video in your classroom.

<http://www.freetch4teachers.com/p/video-creation-resources.html>

### Creating Blogs & Websites

Create blogs & websites that complement instruction.

<http://www.freetch4teachers.com/p/creating-effective-blogs-websites.html>



